

ing the dispositions of the human mind, as to expect that it would be more than very partially conciliated by any possible improvement in the mode of exhibiting Christian truth. But it were to be wished that everything should be done to bring reluctant minds into doubt, at least, whether, if they cannot be evangelical, it be because they are of an order too rectified and refined.

As a further consideration in favour of adopting a more general language, it may be observed, that hypocrisy would then find a much greater difficulty, as far as speech is concerned, in supporting its imposture. The usual language of hypocrisy, at least of vulgar hypocrisy, is cant; and religious cant is often an affected use of the phrases which have been heard employed as appropriate to evangelical truth; with which phrases the hypocrite has connected no distinct ideas, so that he would be confounded if an intelligent examiner were to require an accurate explanation of them ; while yet nothing is more easy to be sung or said. Now were this diction, for the greater part, to vanish from Christian society, leaving the truth in its mere essence behind, and were, consequently, the pretender reduced to assume the guise of religion on the more laborious condition of acquiring an understanding of its leading principles, so as to be able to give them forth discriminatively in language of his own, the part of a hypocrite would be much less easily acted, and less frequently attempted. Religion would therefore be seldomer dishonoured by the mockery of a false semblance.

Again, if this alteration of language were introduced, some of the sincere disciples of evangelical religion would much more distinctly feel the necessity of a positive intellectual hold on the principles of their profession. A systematic recurring formality of words tends to prevent a perfect understanding of the subject, by furnishing for complex ideas a set of ready-framed signs, (like stereotype in printing,) which a man learns to employ without really having the ideas of which the combination should consist. Some of the simple ideas which belong to the combination may be totally absent from his mind, the others, may be most faintly apprehended; there is no precise construction therefore of the thought; and thus the sign which he uses, stands in fact for nothing. If, on hearing one of these phrases,